



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK'S

A spiritual community in which we are gathered to celebrate the gifts of God that empower us to engage boldly in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we live and work.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C.

July 2001

Shrine Mont 2001

"This is my Folk and I cry out for a Folk: Finding my belonging in an Evolving church"

But, Who do you say that I am?

Sermon By George E. Meng, Senior Warden

June 24, 2001

The Gospel

Luke 9:18-24

Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.

The Sermon

For those of you who are new or visiting, my name is George Meng. I am the Senior Warden. Two weeks ago many of us were at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs Virginia for our annual retreat. It has become tradition that a week or two after the retreat the Senior Warden gives a sermon about Shrine Mont.

Basically, the question is always the same: What was Shrine Mont about?

It was about tuna fish - not the nice white albacore kind but the chunk light kind. And peas and boiled potatoes. Shrine Mont is tradition you can count

on. You always know that you will have to put up with stop and go traffic on Route 66 and a 3 hour drive. But along the way, there was always the anticipation borne of the sure knowledge that dinner was at the end of the road -- always the same - chunk light tuna fish, peas and boiled potatoes. So what do they do? They have fresh turkey, dressing and squash - I knew it was a sign.

It was about our four leaders Ellen Cardwell, Johnna Reeder, Nancy Donaldson and Charlie Rupp posing as angels - complete with white gowns, halos and wings - claiming to be taking an audit of St. Mark's at the direction of God and as part of the work of the Heavenly Office of Church Management (otherwise known as HOKUM). Present also, lest we forget them, were large photos of four people who are important in our history. Jim Adams was the Rector for 30 years. Bill Baxter was the Rector before him. Our Christian Education program is much based upon an instructional method authored by Charles Penniman. Finally there was a large photo of Verna Dozier our Warden Emerita, our resident scholar and our treasure who is often with us as she is today.

It was about a Friday night session that a member of our gateway Christian Education class, Life, Faith & Community wrote: "I laughed so hard my sides hurt."

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A Word... about Integrity

by Paul Abernathy



Search for 8th Bishop of Washington continues...

by Paul Abernathy



In Fond Memory of Wes Watkins

by Bill Repsher



Vestry Mouse Report



Hello... from Alaska!

by Connie Jones



Outreach • Music • Arts & More!

It was about a skit featuring our rector, Paul Abernathy, as a delightful although reluctant child - Paulie.

It was about looking hard at church categories and deciding where we are and whether we like it.

It was about remembering Wes Watkins, a member of St. Mark's, whose memorial service was in DC at the zoo on that first Friday night of Shrine Mont.

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But, Who do you say that I am? (continued)

By George Meng

It was about looking at Vestry goals of growth. Goals that had been decided two years ago in 1999, published back then in our parish newsletter, the Gospel, and handed out over a year ago at the annual meeting in 2000. Goals which many had not seen. It was about how the wording of the goal about growth didn't say it right.

It was about wanting to be open and welcoming, but also wanting to protect our identity. It was about how hard it is at times to be welcoming. It was about how indecision and open questions about growth stand in the way of our being and becoming welcoming.

And Saturday night we looked hard at promises we make before the congregation. Promises to give time, concern and money. Promises to carry out the ministry of Christ in the world, at home, in our neighborhoods and in our work. Promises to say goodbye and why - promises to follow Jesus Christ. We looked at how we have lived up to them and where we have disregarded, avoided, been oblivious to, or violated them.

Sunday morning we talked about our history as a church and community. We looked at the present -- How we would find our life at St. Marks. And we looked at the future - How we would live it. Then we celebrated the Eucharist together.

I noted some things about Shrine Mont other than the absence of tuna:

1. We talked about our transition from a Rector of 30 years, through a period of looking at who we were, then recruiting and adjusting to a new Rector and Associate. However, when there was talk of the transition, it was in the past tense and from a historical perspective.

2. Some people talked of a major shift occurring at Easter this year.

3. Going into the Saturday evening session there was a palpable sense of weariness. I took it as an indication that people were working hard.

4. There were kids everywhere. We had 3 full time babysitters and 26 adults worked on youth activities.

5. There were lots of new people. People who didn't know what the transition was about and people who didn't know Jim Adams. Johnna Reeder (one of the leaders) and Michele Nolan (who put together the Senior Warden's reception) were both from the Spring LCF class.

6. The emotions and hesitation surrounding growth issues were evident.

7. We joked about Shrine Mont's Friday night tuna fish and, although the turkey was fresh and far superior, some people were troubled about the change.

8. As we talked about the questions leading to the promises we make, one seemed to cause more trouble than the others: Will you affirm the promise we make at Confirmation to follow Jesus Christ? People asked: What does this mean?

Shrine Mont was about traditions, expectations and looking

again at things decided long ago. And it was about again asking questions that weren't answered the last time we asked. It was about change. And it was about a Christian community asking itself what it means to be a Christian community.

Usually the Senior Warden does this sermon the week after Shrine Mont. When I learned that I had this week, I shrugged it off until I read the Gospel and then I heard Paul's sermon last week and became convinced it was a setup. He was leaving me to try to make sense of denial and willingly taking up your cross.

Picture this. Jesus teaches the apostles how to heal people. Then he tells them to go out and preach and heal. He gives them explicit instructions. Don't take food, extra clothing or money. Don't take anything with you. When somebody in a town gives you a place to live, stay there until it's time to leave. If people don't welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave. Reminds me of what my cats do when they don't like what I've given them to eat.

So now it's weeks or months later. The apostles have been out around the countryside preaching and doing lots of healing as Jesus had told them. They've attracted the attention of Herod who tries to check it out. Nobody seems to know exactly what's going on and he hears that it might be John, Elijah or some other long dead prophet.

Eventually, the apostles get back together with Jesus and they decide to meet by themselves. But the word gets out and a crowd shows up. It's about 5000 people. Obviously, the apostles made a good impression.

Jesus, not one to pass up an opportunity to get the word out, spends the rest of the day doing more preaching and healing.

Then as the day winds down, they find they're in a place where there isn't any food. But somebody comes up with some fish and bread and the next thing you know everybody's fed and there's more leftovers than they started with. Imagine what kind of day that must have been.

So eventually, Jesus and the apostles get off by themselves and he asks them who the crowds say that he is. Sure enough they tell him the same thing Herod heard.

Then he asks them "but who do you say that I am?" There's no hint of hesitation. No questions. And it's clear the apostles are together on this one. Peter is the spokesman. He answers "The Messiah of God".

The apostles had it easy. They knew who he was. So Jesus didn't waste any time explaining. He just told them what they already knew and what they were already doing. Give up everything, take up your cross and follow me.

So here we are two weeks after Shrine Mont and the question remains for us.

But, who do you say that I am? †

Shrine Mont: The Content Sessions

By Ellen Cardwell • Charlie Rupp • Nancy Donaldson • Johnna Reeder -- The Shrine Mont Content Team

We started our Shrine Mont planning armed with thought-provoking materials given to us by George Meng as well as three recent parish wide Reports on Space Use, Music and Youth. Our reading included reports from the past two Vestry retreats, the parish management consultant's recent work with the Vestry and Clergy, and the Vestry Goals adopted in 1999. We also held lengthy conversations with the Senior and Junior Wardens and the Rector.

Based on this, we began to sense that although the clergy and office transitions had drawn to a close, and the parish was in a far more positive and expansive mood than a year ago, concerns about growth and size, being able to afford the level of leadership and support we crave, belonging and identity, procedures and efficiency, core values, communications, and the "culture of hospitality" or "how welcoming are we, really?" were all brewing pretty close to the surface both for individuals and the community.

Our focus for Shrine Mont, inspired by a Zen Haiku, "Though I am in Kyoto, when the cuckoo sings, I long for Kyoto" was:

This is my Folk and I cry out for a Folk: Finding my belonging in an evolving church.

We began the content sessions on Friday evening looking at "Wanting a place to belong, but not wanting to risk too much." The evening was introduced by the white-vested

angels randomly divided the large group into twelve small groups. Discussions focused on sharing personal stories by responding to the questions - What drew you to St. Mark's? Why did you stay when you first came? The groups then made presentations responding to "What is it like now at St. Mark's?" "What keeps you here now?" Although there was a great deal of similarity in the group offerings, as well as the expected humor, creativity and amateur acting skill, it seemed clear that some were more comfortable with the pace and rate of change in the parish than others. While some were happy about belonging, community, hugs - others said that what they were longing for was "knowing everyone," "that old sense of intimacy," "less crowds and busy-ness."

On Saturday morning we focused in on the nuts and bolts of parish growth. Our issue was "I want to be in a diverse and growing community but I need to feel I'm a part of a close-knit family." We launched the discussion by looking a series of facts about the parish demonstrating growth cycles during the past 20 years and models of churches (primarily based on size lay leadership and the role of the clergy) that was employed by the consultant. We the small groups to determine what model of church they thought St. Mark's was - the choices were subsequently revealed to be patriarchal, pastoral, program or corporate - and we asked about the reaction to St. Mark's being identified as one of those models. While some were enthusiastic about being a "corporate church," others found that notion more than a little disquieting.

The second part of the morning we asked the groups to look at three of the Vestry Goals, adopted in 1999, specifically dealing with welcoming newcomers, stimulating growth and outreach. We asked each group to identify the costs and promises of pursuing these goals and to post their reports upon their return. The Group discussion



The HOKUM Angels

Angels of the Heavenly Office of Church Management (HOKUM) - "Syrup" the Supervisor (C.Rupp), "Sweet-Tart" Angel (Cardwell), "Red Hot" Angel (Reeder) and "Death by Chocolate" Angel who was on special assignment (Donaldson). The four angels were found working in cramped space with paper-strewn tables, charts, calculators, adding machines and a Pantheon of Saints above their cloud-bedecked office. The HOKUM angels had failed to alert St. Peter to the emerging crisis at Christ Church in Accokeek and as penance were dispatched to ShrineMont to do an audit of St. Mark's. If necessary they were to help direct St. Mark's to re-invent itself in this post-transition era.

Haiku

*When I am in Kyoto
And I hear the cuckoo sing
I long for Kyoto.*

--Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)

Background: Matsuo Basho is known as the first great poet in the history of haiku.

Basho was a Zen monk who travelled across Japan during the Tokugawa era, teaching and writing more than a thousand haiku. He took his name from the wide-leaved banana tree (the basho tree) given by a disciple that shaded the hut where he lived in seclusion on the outskirts of Edo, now present-day Tokyo.

Basho is widely regarded as Japan's greatest poet, and is credited with revitalizing the haiku form when it was expiring from formal artificiality. His style, called shofu, is known for its *sabi*, or contented solitude, and *wabi*, or humble appreciation of the everyday or commonplace. While not bound by rules, his poems generally follow the traditional development of two elements divided by a *kineji*, or cutting word, the first element conveying a condition or situation, and the second a sudden perception or flashing insight.

Shrine Mont: The Content Sessions (continued)

focused on what St. Mark's would look like if the goals were implemented and what would be at stake. Participants expressed their anxiety about growth and size, feeling over-run, the loss of intimacy and the possible weakening of core values. But others spoke about new possibilities, impact within the wider community, better defining what size could be accommodated while continuing to build the parish. We closed with a reflection from John's Gospel concerning Jesus advice to the disciples when they were unsure what the future would bring.



Singing "I am the Church, You are the Church"

After lunch and break time, on Saturday afternoon our issue was "I want to be opening and welcoming and I want to protect my identity." A Hawaiian island setting and "aloha!" launched the groups creating "welcoming ceremonies" intended to welcome newcomers into St. Mark's. Johnna was a ringer in her hula skirt and coconut bra. The St. Mark's youth led off by singing "I am the Church, You are the Church, We are the Church" followed by the Teens who summarized their group discussion with a series of skits demonstrating what it's like to be a teen at St. Mark's. Other groups reported back with songs, outfits, poems, skits, pantomimes -some of which indicated feelings of ambivalence on the part of newcomers and current parishioners alike. Our question to the group was "What gets in the way of our being welcoming at St. Mark's? Some people allowed that it was hard work to include new people. One person said that he might have to be with people whose differences from him would make him feel uncomfortable in a place where he wanted to feel like he belonged. Although the discussion could have gone on longer, the delicious Senior Warden's reception beckoned.

On Saturday evening, we looked at the promises we make to each other, to ourselves and to our community when we make or witness the vows as friends, members or confirmed communicants of St. Mark's. We started with the promise that we make to welcome new communicants as our brothers and sisters and support them in keeping their vows. We also looked at the vow we make to support St. Mark's with our time, concern and money; our vow to make our praise and complaints known to the appropriate people and to openly declare our reasons for leaving should we decide to do so and finally, our vow to carry out the ministry of Christ in the world, in our homes, our neighborhood and our work.

In small group discussion, participants were asked look at specific instances where they lived up to these St.

Mark's vows or where people had disregarded or avoided them, been oblivious to them or violated them. A subsequent discussion focused on what happens to you personally when you don't live up to your promises and what happens to the community when its members don't live up to their promises. The vows that seemed most perplexing for those this session at ShrineMont were making our complaints known (telling the truth in love) and following the ministry of Christ in the world. Nancy offered a beautiful reflection combining both poetry and impressions from long-time parishioner Wes Watkins memorial service where Nancy had offered one of the eulogies on Friday night.

On Sunday morning, we asked the assembled group what they had discovered over the weekend about three key concepts: belonging ... evolving ... church. The level of discernment and awareness about these things seemed to illuminate a deeper understanding than had been present on Friday night. We then looked at who was included when we referred to "us". In ever widening circles extending from the Old Rec. Hall we looked at how we could embrace an infinite universe...we even made Mr. Moomaw, manager of ShrineMont, an honorary member of St. Mark's.

In response to questions, we told some of the history of our four "saints" in our "Pantheon of Saints" - Bill Baxter, Charles Penniman, Jim Adams and Verna Dozier. We also used a classic Charles Shultz Peanuts cartoon to point the way to where we were headed.

We ventured to suggest - in a reflection based on two of Charles Penniman's Categories: Symbol and Church - that some of our deepest longings - what St. Augustine called "the God shaped hole in us" - are not about church as a building or even as a community of people but about a completely different experience of "church" as the "new Jerusalem come down from heaven to earth" ... God within us; God which gives us "friendly mobility within history" to be with people who might be threatening to us because of their differences. The power of God within us would enable us to "find our life and live it."

So, we asked people to form new groups and gather in these new groups to respond to the charge: How are you going to find your life at St. Mark's and live it? These group responses were given as offerings during the Sunday Worship Service at the Shrine. ✠

A CEREMONY OF WELCOME (Written By Group 1 at Shrine Mont)

We welcome you to St. Mark's.
We promise to care for you.
We will be your people....
We will weep with you and laugh with you
and
Challenge you to grow spiritually.
We will share our stories with you
And listen to yours.
And write new chapters in our book of life.
When we fall short, we ask you to tell us
and forgive us.
And if you leave, our prayers will go with you.

Son of a Duck - A Shrine Mont Reflection

by Brock Hansen

The heavenly setting of the opening content sessions at Shrine Mont and the HOCM angels reminded me of a story which I have recast to fit the occasion:

The story may now be told of three St. Mark's parishioners who show up at the Pearly Gates at the same time, (we will call them Jane, Paul, and George because that trio has a familiar ring to it) and are met by St. Peter for an entrance interview. They are told that there is only one rule they must commit to following: "Don't step on a duck."

They each readily agree and are admitted into heaven, only to discover that there are ducks everywhere. Millions of ducks, everywhere you look. Within minutes, Jane has accidentally stepped on a duck, and to her horror, two burly archangels swoop down and shackle her to the most disgusting, vile smelling, ill tempered and generally repulsive individual she has ever seen. She is told that this is her neighbor for eternity, and when she learns to love her neighbor without reservation, she will truly be in heaven.

Paul and George immediately intensify their commitment to follow the duck

rule, now that they have a clearer view of the consequences. But one day, while Paul is working out a seventeen word alliteration for an eighteen word homily, he accidentally steps on a duck. The two burly archangels swoop down and handcuff him to the most unforgivingly homely and dour and nasty individual he has ever encountered and he is told: "This is your neighbor for eternity. When you learn to love your neighbor, you will truly be in heaven."

George redoubles his commitment to abstain from all carelessness around ducks, and works out a methodical approach that succeeds in keeping him completely alert to all ducks. Two years pass. George is enjoying heaven as well as he can while maintaining an obsessive focus on duck avoidance, when the two burly archangels swoop down and chain him to the most wonderful, attractive, sweet smelling, and loving individual he has ever met or imagined. "Is this my reward for not stepping on a duck for two years?" he asks the archangels. "Not at all," they answer. "She stepped on a duck."

"God bless the duck she stepped on," quoth the George. "Hey, how come there are so many ducks around here anyway?"

The archangels answered, "The ducks are all those souls who have already learned to love their neighbors."

If stepping on ducks is a metaphor for breaking our promises to each other, imagine being locked forever in community with our fellow scofflaws until we find a way to accept the inevitable squawking. As an introvert, this is a real problem for me. I tend to get squidgy when subjected to too much intense communication for too long. I often depart for a little peace. Sometimes I am careless in my departure, worrying or disappointing others by my inattention. Out of respect for my own needs, I have to allow myself to withdraw sometimes. Out of respect for others, I could do a better job of taking my leave when I do so. This is the lesson I learned (again) at Shrine Mont this year. ✚

Some Personal Reflections on Shrine Mont

by Ellen Cardwell

It was a tremendous privilege to be asked to be on the Content Team and lead Shrine Mont; but it was also a tremendous amount of effort. Due to the contested election for Sr. Warden combined with the very late date of Easter 2001, and thus, the Annual Meeting, the Shrine Mont Content Team began working only three and one half weeks before the retreat. At that point the usual balance gender balance between men and woman was impossible to achieve and there was little time to meet extensively or research all the materials that might identify where the Parish is now.

Although the particular composition of the team and the time allotted may have been less than ideal, I felt that we worked well together and that we were faithful in pursuing the task within the parameters given us by the Senior and Junior Wardens and the Rector. We worked "functionally" throughout the planning and execution of Shrine Mont. We gathered and generated interesting

information - some of which is reproduced in this issue of the Gospel. We worked hard - and creatively - and we had a good time working together.

So, now that it's all over - Where am I left?

- I wonder - Does all that work make any difference to the parish? How to we turn what we looked at into more than just more reports and more lists?
- One of the pitfalls of the way the planning worked this year is that there was little communication between the Content and the Comfort teams which, in turn, resulted in scheduling snafus. How can we coordinate better so that every activity at ShrineMont receives sufficient time and attention.
- I felt disappointed that a great number of people who usually go to ShrineMont and who make a great contribution weren't at Shrine Mont this year and that even those who were there were not real-

ly attending many of the content sessions.

- One of the interesting things about this year's Shrine Mont is that it appeared (I don't have any substantive data - only impressions) that there were more newcomers in proportion to long term members, than I can recall from past Shrine Monts. I don't really know the reason but one thing that having a total newcomer on the team and in the front of the room does is to communicate a very positive message to newcomers. I think that we may have done a better job of recruiting newcomers than longer-term members. Maybe some people are simply "Shrine Monted out."
- When Tom Foggin said during the worship service that Shrine Mont should be re-examined and re-invented the way Life Community and Faith had been - I found myself starting to bristle and get defensive. But upon reflection, he may indeed be on to something.

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Some Personal Reflections on Shrine Mont

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Here are some factors to consider in this process:

- Instead of people free to go to content sessions, increasingly we attract a lot of parents with infants and small children who are either never in the sessions, or have to pop in and out.
- The whole business of providing youth activities takes up the time of a number of adults who used to be free to go to content sessions.
- Working families and in fact working anybody arrive at Shrine Mont looking for some relaxation in the mountains - spending 5 two to three hour sessions working is not what many people want to do. I noticed that everyone I ask this year was feeling "tired."
- It's not completely clear what Shrine Mont is for. It used to be that more than half the parish was there and it was possible to have a dialogue and even come to consensus. But now with only about 100 adults in content sessions, less than 1/4th of the total "pledge units" it's hard to say that what happens at Shrine Mont is at the core of our life at St. Mark's or that the discussions do or even should be binding on those who weren't there.
- For people unfamiliar with the parish or who come as guests (and there are always some every year), the focus on St. Mark's values etc. makes them feel very much like outsiders with no basis for participating.
- For those in the parish who are aging or who are not in great physical shape, the hill to the Old Rec Hall is increasingly hard to navigate and therefore dividing into small groups and going down the hill to cabins to meet is physically draining. The attri-

tion of those who had to go to small groups down the hill felt like it leached a lot of the energy and focus from the sessions.

- The meal schedule at Shrine Mont has shifted. It is more family friendly to eat at 5:30 PM in the evening - but it cuts into free time (even the perception of free time). In the meantime, Lunch at 12:30 also compresses the possibility of free time.
- When campers are far away and tasked with setting up tents, cooking and cleaning up their own meals, it does seem to me that it is very hard for them to participate fully in the content sessions.

As we approach Shrine Monts for future years, I would hope that we would consciously construct a weekend experience that honors the evolving nature of our parish and upholds the traditions of dialogue, play and camaraderie that have marked the St. Mark's Shrine Mont retreats since they started more than 35 years ago. †



Newcomers Lynn & Michelle with Walt Moody



one of the many skits....



relaxing with Paul during the Senior Warden reception

Symbols of our Faith

by Randy Marks

The run-up to Shrine Mont was rich in symbols. Pentecost Sunday included no sermon seminar or announcements, incense, and Bishop Dixon. I found the service profoundly moving and will remember particularly our embrace of Bishop Dixon, as well as her observation that the Holy Spirit, besides being a comforter, is present when we grapple with the hard questions that God and our lives lay before us. Driving to Shrine Mont, I happened to hear Cardinal McCarick's response to the question "what is the relationship among the three figures of the Trinity?" (The questioner admitted he had not learned the answer from many years of Catholic education, but said it was "the first time I had the chance to ask a Cardinal.") McCarick replied that it was love and the love that they share for each other is the same love the Trinity has for us. (As if to emphasize the point, Paul preached on Sunday that community is so important that even God is in a community.)

Although I showed up at Shrine Mont on wings of the Holy Spirit, feeling connected by our wonderful worship and by ties to many of you, I also was wrestling with the hard question of whether and how I fit it. Even knowing that my personal demons block me from feeling connected to people does make the feelings of rejection I sometimes experience easier to bear. My Shrine Mont experience left me still wondering how I fit in (I am still waiting for a call to a role within our community), but with more faith that I do, which is a gift from God for which I am grateful.

I came away with another question: about the symbols of our faith. Shrine Mont reminded me how much those symbols draw me. For example, I loved the reference to the "God shaped hole in my heart" and the realization that the Charles Penniman category (description) called "Church" sounds like the Holy Spirit. I experience my faith in my yearning to take communion; because my (dominant) rational side cannot comprehend this yearning, God must exist for me to have it. My Sunday small group discussed these symbols; it reminded me how differently they affect each of us. Some, like me, found their faith in the symbols like the Trinity and the Great Commandment (to love God and our neighbor), while others participate in spite of them. (To Sunday's service in the Shrine, we contributed a drawing of various symbols, including the cross and heart (symbolizing love).) Yet we have all ended up in an Episcopal church, where symbols of faith are central. Why? And what does that mean for us as individuals and as a community?

After all, St. Mark's is not the only community that values authenticity and interesting conversation. So, to me, the fact that we are in faith community that emphasizes faith symbols that both unite and divide us is significant. (I keep wondering why those of us who are put off by worship, the words of the Nicene Creed, etc., aren't Unitarians.) I suspect that God has created the Episcopal church to teach the world that a faith community can combine authenticity and mystery or, in Bishop Dixon's concept, the Holy Spirit both as comforter and questioner.

Bishop Dixon's conflict with Christ Church, Accokeek, is a conflict about symbols. Christ Church rebels against her (mostly symbolic) authority mostly because she embraces woman and gay priests. We stand with our Bishop both because she is our Bishop and because we value her attitude of acceptance. But we could also find ourselves on the other side of that divide: suppose, for example, our new Bishop believes that our giving communion to non-Christians is wrong? As a church and as individuals, I see us living in the tension

of "I want a framework of symbols to support my faith and I want to be free to choose my own path."

It is a gift of grace that the symbols are my pathway to God and community. It is a tragedy that the same symbols block that pathway for others at St. Mark's and block understanding between Bishop Dixon and Christ Church. I pray that part of what Paul rightly calls our "re-invention" will help us explore the power of symbols to support and hobble us and, more generally, our connection with the Episcopal Church and God. †

If Death Were a Woman

By Ellen Kort

**I'd want her to come for me smelling of cinnamon
wearing bright cotton purple maybe hot pink**

**A red bandana in her hair She'd bring
good coffee papaya juice bouquet of sea grass**

**saltine crackers and a lottery ticket We'd dip
our fingers into moist pouches of lady's slippers**

**crouch down to see how cabbages feel when wind
bumps against them in the garden We'd walk**

**through Martin's woods find the old house
its crumbling foundation strung with honeysuckle vines**

**and in the front yard a surprise jonquils
turning the air yellow glistening and ripe**

**still blooming for a gardener long gone
We'd head for the beach wearing strings of shells**

**around our left ankles laugh at their ticking
sounds the measured beat that comes with dancing**

**on hard-packed sand the applause of ocean and gulls
She'd play ocarina songs to a moon almost full**

**and I'd sing off-key We'd glide and swoop
become confetti of leaf fall all wings**

**floating on small whirlwinds never once dreading
the heart-silenced drop And when it was time**

**she would not bathe me Instead we'd scrub the porch
pour leftover water on flowers stand a long time**

**in sun and silence then holding hands
we'd pose for pictures in the last light**

A Word from The Rector on Integrity

By Reverend Paul Abernathy

At the Vestry meeting of Sunday, April 22, 2001, I asked the body to endorse our affiliation as a parish partner with Integrity. The Vestry unanimously voted to do so.

As a word of information and interest to you, my parish family, Integrity is a national organization within the Episcopal Church that has been the leading voice of advocacy for more than twenty-five years for the full inclusion in the life of the church of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people (GLBT). (In the Roman Catholic Church, Dignity is the name of the organization with a similar call and charge.) Having said this, however, I hasten to add that Integrity is more than a special interest or single agenda group. Rather, Integrity's championing of the cause of inclusion, more broadly, speaks to the whole church concerning the equally important companion issue of diversity, and, more deeply, sensitizes the whole church concerning the constant need of our intentionality about acceptance and affirmation (indeed, celebration) of all people. There are many groups within the church that, in serving a specific group, address these larger purposes (e.g., the Episcopal Women's Caucus and the Union of Black Episcopalians). It is in the light of who we are as a parish in our



historic embrace and willingness to wrestle with inclusion and diversity that led me to ask the Vestry to support our partnership with Integrity.

As an Integrity partner, we will receive a subscription to the quarterly magazine, The Voice of Integrity, the issues of which will be placed in our undercroft library. We receive a copy of

Claiming the Promise, a groundbreaking Bible study on homosexuality developed by the Methodist Reconciling Congregations Program in cooperation with Integrity and other GLBT faith groups. We also will be listed as a partner on Integrity's web page and in The Voice of Integrity.

Integrity did make an appeal for financial support. As we had no provision for additional support for groups in our current 2001 parish budget, I made an offering of \$250.00 from the Rector's Discretionary Fund. In coming years and subsequent annual budget preparation cycles, should the Vestry continue to approve our parish's partnership with Integrity, I will ask that a financial contribution be included as a line item disbursement. ✚

Update on Search for 8th Bishop of Washington

By Reverend Paul Abernathy



The Search Committee, on which I am privileged to serve as Deputy Chair, has been meeting bi-weekly since February. Up to this point, our labor has focused largely on the development of the profile of the Diocese of Washington. Recently, the members of the Search Committee participated in three meetings with clerical and lay representatives of congregations throughout the diocese. We shared the draft profile and elicited comments and concerns. These gatherings were profoundly informative. I grasped anew a sense of the larger church as manifested in our diocese. Truly, we are a dynamic, organic body of people. We have differing and, at times, wholly contrary points of view. Nevertheless, I found afresh a sense of our commonality in community. We are joined together as the church in a shared expression of our Episcopal Church heritage. A heritage that tolerates, indeed, favors the wrestling with life's ambiguities under the guidance of those four authorities, historically at the heart of the Anglican ethos since the time of the Reformation: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

As we go forward, our pace will increase. Beginning in July and through October, the Search Committee will meet weekly. This is the remaining timeline:

June 1-July 31, 2001	Receive names of suggested nominees
August 1-October 31, 2001	Review suggested nominees
November 1, 2001	Announcement of slate of nominees
November 15, 2001	Deadline for nominations by petition
January 9-12, 2002	Introduction of nominees throughout the diocese
January 24-26, 2002	Electing Convention & 107th Diocesan Convention
June 1, 2002	Consecration & Installation of the 8th Bishop of the Diocese of Washington

I bid your good wishes and earnest prayers as we continue this work. To that end, I share with you the Prayer for the Search adopted by the diocesan Standing Committee, which called the Search Committee into being and commissioned us to carry out our charge.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ chose twelve apostles and sent them to proclaim the Gospel and build up your church. Bless, we pray, your church in this Diocese of Washington, that the Holy Spirit may guide the minds and hearts of those charged with helping to seek and elect our next Bishop. Hold before us our call to serve you and share in the ministry of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, the Shepherd of the flock, who laid down his life for the sheep. May we hear the voice of the one who calls us each by name, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. ✚

Octogenarian Ministering Still

by Shawn J. Shears, Staff Writer, The Largo Gazette

Apr. 12, 2001

At 82, Verna J. Dozier hasn't lost her touch. Her character has won her the respect and friendship of neighbors in the Collington Episcopal Life Care Community in Mitchellville where she has lived for seven years, and within the Episcopal community in general.

Dozier's calm and welcoming presence makes her a gracious hostess. She entertains visitors at Collington often and invites them to relax in her comfortable armchair covered with a canary-yellow slipcover. She shares her opinions with visitors and expects them to share theirs. She enjoys conversing but does not feel a need to direct the exchange.

"I let them set the topic. I'm in a responsive mood," she said. Dozier moved to Collington from the District. Dozier is also a noted Episcopal Bible scholar. In 1991 she published, "The Dream of God," a book describing Dozier's interpretation of the Bible, God and how the church should operate. In her work, she empowers lay people, or non-clergy, in their endeavor to understand the Bible. Her book, "The Dream of God" is her favorite among her works about God and the Bible.

"It's everything I believe that the Bible story is about. The Bible story is so misused. People use it as a weapon to hit other people on the head with, which is not the point of the Bible story at all," she said.

She has no problem giving herself credit for her accomplishments. Neither do others.

"She is one of the most extraordinary human beings in the world," Bishop Jane Holmes Dixon said.

During the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington in January, Dixon honored Dozier in her remarks.

"Verna Dozier has devoted her life to helping so many understand that the dream of God is that all in God's creation will live together in justice and harmony, glorifying God by loving each other," Dixon said.

Dozier's home life created that love. She described her father, who was from a small town outside Atlanta, as a



Allison Pasek/The Gazette

Verna Dozier and her sister, Lois, were the models for the children at the feet of St. Amos in this stained glass window in St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill in the District. Verna was honored with the window by members of the church who donated more than \$10,000 to have the window made in her honor. Dozier chose St. Amos as the subject of the window because the prophet was known for his ability to show God's justice.

brilliant man, a country boy who never had a chance. Dozier keeps a picture of him on her bookshelf. He is standing at a fountain on Howard University's campus, dressed in a suit and tie and wearing a hat. Her mother was not deterred in securing an education for her daughters. Her mother, born and raised in the District, encouraged Dozier and her sister, Lois, to read books.

Both sisters attended Howard. Lois became the first African-American librarian for the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, said Dee Hahn-Rollins, 60, of Alexandria, Va., a long-time friend of Dozier.

"She changed my life as a young woman," said Hahn-Rollins of Dozier. "She is, next to my mother, the most significant woman in my life." Hahn-Rollins has been friends with Dozier for more than 30 years.

Dozier helped found a program called the Teacher Corps in the 1970s to train returning Peace Corps volunteers and others to teach in District schools, Hahn-Rollins said.

After retiring from teaching, Dozier devoted herself to her self-directed biblical studies. Dozier's reputation grew and she began working with congregations all over the United States, Hahn-Rollins said.

Dozier took her approach, which is called an experiential approach to Bible study, to Kenya in 1984 as part of a five-year leadership development project with the Anglican Church there. Rather than interpret the Bible for them, she provided context for the readings and encouraged the women to reach their own conclusions about what the text meant for them.

Though her health is more frail now that she has Parkinson's disease, her impact on those around her has been and is still great.

"People are still awed to be in her presence. ... That love and acceptance is just as palpable today as it was the first time I met her almost 30 years ago," Dixon said.

"We call her the resident saint of St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Capitol Hill," said Al Rollins, Hahn-Rollins' husband. Dozier was one of the first African-Americans to attend the church. She integrated it at the invitation of Bill Baxter, the church's priest.

The church, located at Third and A streets in South East of the District, has a stained glass window in Dozier's honor. It depicts Amos, Dozier's favorite Old Testament prophet, and two children sitting at his feet listening. The children featured are Dozier and her sister Lois, Rollins said.

Hahn-Rollins said the money for the window was raised three years ago from a list of people Dozier sent birthday and Christmas cards to for years. When more money than was necessary was raised, the Dozier Family Educational Fund was established.

Dozier does not make a big deal about her saintly reputation.

"I lived my life," she said. "I saw that as my ministry. Ministry is serving God wherever we are." ✠

Wes Watkins ... In Fond Memory

By Bill Repsher

I was stunned and saddened to learn at Shrinemont that Wes Watkins had died. Over the last few years, I had allowed Wes to slip out of my life -- surely one of the more foolish things I've done since arriving on the planet.

Over the years, my primary recurring contact with Wes was in conjunction with the St. Mark's Outdoor Extravaganza. (For anyone not familiar, the OE was an annual Memorial Day weekend camping trip which ran for about ten years, where as many as 85 intrepid St. Mark's-ians would troop off to the woods and act like mad fools for three days. Events included hiking, white water rafting (our signature activity), sight-seeing, campfires, outrageous dining, and wonderful, wonderful fellowship.)

Each of the three mornings of these trips, it was my particular pleasure to arise to the sound of a crackling fire, and the smell of the strongest coffee mankind has ever known. The perpetrator of these delights was Wes, who was always the earliest riser in camp. I was always the second riser, and I would poke my head out of the tent to see Wes at the fire, festooned in cowboy hat, denim jacket and pants, and boots. I would stumble over to join him and, for about an hour or more, Wes and I would have the most marvelous conversations. If it had anything to do with being alive in the universe, Wes and I discussed it -- politics, of course, the state of the world and our visions for the future -- right on down to the most intimate and detailed affairs of the human heart. From time to time, I would say something which struck Wes as funny, and I would be treated to Wes' delightfully hearty laugh, surely one of the best ever. I shall always treasure those wonderful early mornings with Wes.

Beyond enhancing my own personal enjoyment of the OE, Wes performed a number of wonderful roles in the wider group as well. The young people on the trip adored Wes. One day

an otherwise competent parent was having a devil of a time encouraging one of his young daughters to climb into the raft at the beginning of one of our rafting adventures. (Given the demographics of our group, we avoided the hairier stretches of rivers on our trips; however, the rapids we shot were exhilarating enough to give many first timers a good deal of pause.) Suddenly, this parent had a brainstorm -- call in Wes Watkins! Within minutes, Wes had allayed the youngster's fears, and she was in her raft, paddling away and having a great time!

There was another portion of the Outdoor Extravaganza where Wes played a recurring wonderful role. Each year, on Saturday night, we would conduct the Annual Outdoor Extravaganza Campfire Talent Show. We had only one rule: while everyone was eligible to -- indeed, encouraged to -- enter the show, anyone demonstrating any genuine talent was automatically disqualified! People, young and old, got up and did all manner of outrageous things, from skipping rope, to break dancing, to telling really bad jokes -- all to thunderous applause, mind you! No one, for example, will ever forget Leslie Allen's death-defying tumbling act, John Straub's rousing midnight rendition of "Dem bones, dem bones...", just to mention a few. (John, a former parishioner, worked for "the Company" at the time.)

Wes was always our Chief Talent Show Judge. Each year he would select a number of kindred (i.e., loving and fun-loving) spirits to join him as judges. Each year, after our last act, Wes and his cohorts would retire to conduct their deliberations. After a sufficient lapse of time to create some delicious suspense, Wes and his cohorts would reappear at the campfire and announce their decisions. The awards were presented by categories, which, thanks to Wes and his fellow judges, were always the wackiest things this side of the

Annual Crab Feast. Just listening to the good-humored and clever awards was a major treat in itself. Then each year, after the last award was announced, we would all look around and experience the annual miracle of realizing that everyone who had put themselves forward had won!

It may be a little corny, but I visualize Wes up in heaven tending the fire and stirring the coffee, and laughing that wonderful laugh. God, how I'll miss him! †

St. Mark's Photo Directory

Olan Mills is producing the third St. Mark's Photo Directory. Each member or family will receive a free color 8x10 portrait and the directory. There is no cost to St. Mark's and no obligation to buy any portraits.

Photos will be taken in the Adams Room on

- Friday July 13 from 3-9:30pm
- Sat July 14 from 10-5
- Sun July 15 from 10-5
- Friday July 27 3-9:30pm
- Sat July 28 from 10-5

Olan Mills policy prohibits pets due to allergy and insurance issues. Call John Yanish at 202-722-0605 (Home) to make an appointment.

Committee members are John Yanish (chair), Nancy Yanish, Tom Schongolla, Michelle Strange, Raiford Gaffney, Linda Huntington Gangloff, Henry Wolfinger, Pamela Foggin, Beryl Lillaston, Ann Aukamp and Tracy Council.

Announcements & Ads

SUMMER WORSHIP AT ST. MARK'S

For the second summer in a row, the Clergy and Worship Committee will test some new ways of planning and executing our communal worship services. Like last year, for the Sundays in August, there was a single service at 10:00 a.m. Given the success of that experiment, this summer we will expand the range of the single Sunday service experience from Shrine Mont Sunday (June 10) through the Sunday of the Labor Day weekend (September 2). Also, rather than alternating the "9 o'clock" and "11 o'clock" formats, we will aim to have a relatively consistent format that includes both a sermon and a short (10 minutes or so) opportunity for people to offer Sermon Seminar-style commentary, followed by the administration of the Eucharist.

To make the summer Sundays "family friendly," our new Director of Youth Ministries, Jen Drganc, is organizing Lion's Chapel for kids from kindergarten through sixth grade. This will run from about 10:00 to 10:55 am. Older kids are welcome to help Jen, stick around during the service, or hang around and talk with adults who want to hang around and listen to them.

Two other new features should make the summer special. First, all of the members of the Life, Community, & Faith courses taught this fall and spring will have a chance to offer a short statement during a summer service about their decision to make St. Mark's their faith community. Although this is completely voluntary, please encourage them to use the chance to make themselves better known to the rest of us. Second, the services for an entire month will focus on a single, broad theme: "The Diversity of God's Kingdom" in July and "Risk Taking" in August. The clergy will be scheduling two meetings at which they will explore these topics with parishioners to develop specific ideas that will shape their sermons, as well as the liturgy. Watch your bulletin for dates, places and times.

REPORT FROM THE OUTREACH BOARD

Last summer St. Mark's sponsored a one-week visit to the FLOC ("For Love of Children") summer camp for seventeen children, age 8 to 14, whose families live at the Potomac Gardens housing project. Many of the children had already been involved with St. Mark's through Inner City Outings. The Residents Council of Potomac Gardens has now asked the Outreach Board to sponsor a similar visit this summer, and we have agreed. Although FLOC will do much of the work, St. Mark's will be responsible for making sure that families have the opportunity to sign up, helping with medical examination forms, and helping to cope with the inevitable organizational issues. Additional help is welcome. If anyone is interested, please call Nancy Van Scoyoc (703/256-5664), who chairs the outreach committee responsible for this effort. We hope that we can build on this experience, particularly after the children return in the fall, to deepen our relationship with the people of Potomac Gardens and work together with them in other ways.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Recruiting for Junior Warden's Advisory Committee. Background: Wardens, Clergy and certain other staff have advisory committees (AC) comprised of lay parishioners who minister to them by meeting in confidentiality as a group periodically throughout the year. Most meet monthly. The primary goal is to offer support with dialogue, feedback, encouragement, and constructive criticism. There is an immediate need for several new members on the Junior Warden's advisory committee, in order that it may begin meeting in July. In an effort to have balance in this committee, newer parishioners (less than 8 years as members) are especially encouraged to express interest, as are members who normally attend the 11:00 am service. AC members typically experience a sense of reward in actively supporting St. Mark's through this work. This could be a very constructive niche for your service to the community. Interested? **Please contact Dee Hahn-Rollins or Bruce Ritter, Co-coordinators of Staff Development, ASAP.**
Dee- e-mail dhahn-rollins@trg-inc.com OR tel: 703.548.3535 (w).
Bruce- e-mail rbritter@erols.com OR tel: 703.845.9399 (w/h).

HEADS UP: Two Seminarians will be part of the St. Mark's scene, effective this autumn. Each will need an advisory committee (members and a convener), so expressions of interest in serving on their committees are solicited now from parishioners- whether you have been part of this community for 1 year or 40+ years, no matter which service you usually attend, no matter where you have come from en route to St. Mark's. Think about it. More on this later.

New high school graduate, experienced, responsible, and enthusiastic, seeks summer position in child care, office work, etc.. Available June 4. Kate Merrill 202-547-4772

A 1991 Ford Escort with 150,000 miles on it is for sale! It's a stick shift that has been great for driving in the city. It may need some work, but has been running fine for me the past two and half years. The tires are new, the battery is new and I replaced the alternator a year ago. Please contact Heather Powers at 202-548-2434.

GOSPEL ARTICLE LENGTH GUIDELINE

We typically receive more submissions for publication than we have space. We have been applying an unpublished guideline of 750 words as a maximum article length - about 3 typed pages, double-spaced - with some flexibility over 750 words, depending on available space and on such factors as importance, timeliness, and literary merit. Please limit your future submissions to 750 words, or less. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and length. Generally speaking, submissions substantially in excess of 750 words will be returned to the author with the request that it be edited to the guideline limit. Thank you for your cooperation.



The Gospel According to St. Mark's is printed on recycled paper.

Arts at St. Mark's

FOR A BREAK FROM STRESS THIS SUMMER... TRY ONE OF THE ARTS:

Dance Lessons.....contact Rosie Brooks, Dance Studio director

***Sing with the summer choir.....contact Keith Reas, Director of Music
Washington Summer Sings...join some of DC's finest choral conductors in
sing-a-longs...Faure Requiem (7/10), Mozart Requiem (7/17)...
call 202.232.7594 for further information***

***Sacred Circles...support for artists and those still searching for the artist within
Artist's Way groups will be forming this summer
contact Doris Burton fo more information***

***St Mark's Players 2001-02 Season includes "Best Christmas Pageant Ever",
"You Can't Take it With YOU", "Into the Woods"
and a 20th anniversary year gala...***

Arts Council Presents a two person art show featuring the work of Dave Evelyn and Will Jervis

***Music at St. Mark's begins it's new season with a special concert given by
Keith S. Reas, Director of Music, marking 10 years at St. Mark's and
his 50th Birthday...***

...and much more!!

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training

By George Meng

Recently there was an egroup notice by Susan Block about the first part of a two part series on Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training (SMPT). The first part deals with child sexual abuse. The second part deals with sexual harassment issues.

Susan extended an invitation to take SMPT not only to certain categories of people who must take the training but also to all of you. On behalf of our entire community, I invite you to seriously consider signing up for the first part on Saturday, November 3, 2001 from 9 AM to 3 PM.

We are committed at St. Mark's to creating and maintaining a welcoming and open community. This applies not only to a diverse group of adults but also to children of all ages. Key to our doing so is assuring all who are part of or visiting our community that they are safe. Safe in our building, with our staff and with our members.

The world is a different place. Things have changed dramatically. We all need to be aware and wary of things that in the past were of no concern.

Sexual misconduct issues pervade virtually all of our lives.

Mindful of our discussions at Shrine Mont about the various promises we make to our community and some of the questions that came up, I call your attention to one of the questions: Will you carry out the ministry of Christ in the world, in your home, in your neighborhood and in your work? We could talk a long time about what the ministry of Christ is. But I know one thing it's not - it doesn't include sexual misconduct. Sometimes the best way to do something is to make sure you don't do the opposite.

Please consider expanding your horizons and learning about these issues on 11/3/01. Please register with Susan Block before 9/15/01. By that date she has to tell the diocese the number that will be attending. You can register by sending the following to Susan Block: Name, phone number, address, email address, and if you work with a parish group, what it is. ☩

The Vestry Mouse Report

by Christi Hawley Sadoti

The June Vestry meeting was the first opportunity for this mouse to witness the new leadership of George Meng and Jane Rutherford, along with newly elected vestry members Tracy Councill, Peter Hawley, and Katharine Redmond. It appears that the newer members are still getting their bearings, as the Senior Warden took a back seat to the Rector, and deferred to him in ordering the business for the day. The mouse would expect that, over time, the Senior Warden will gradually take a more active role as he becomes more comfortable with his position and more educated on the issues with which the Vestry - an ever changing body - has been dealing. This transition would be nothing new; certainly by the end of her term, our previous Senior Warden was significantly more involved in managing the agenda than at the beginning. Furthermore, the mouse has a personal belief that it is wise for managers to take the time to become aware of and educated on the issues before pretending they know how to solve them.

As previous Vestries had identified the need to take a more proactive role in communicating issues to the larger parish, this Vestry seemed to make assignments on the spot as to who would write a Gospel article or send out an E-group message after each major topic was discussed. The mouse views this as a positive development. The concern is not some perverse desire to appear busy before the greater community, but a

sincere wish to keep the parish informed and to provide a venue for discussion and input.

Major issues discussed at the June meeting included acknowledgement of the new hospitality stewards and the system envisioned by David Evelyn. In addition, there was ample discussion about who should be required and who should be encouraged to attend the Child Sexual Abuse Training Workshop on November 3. The Vestry would prefer that more people rather than fewer would attend this workshop. George Meng will be writing an article to further educate the parish on this subject and to encourage all who work with youth to attend the training.

Despite a record canvass, funds are still coming in under budget. Parish Treasurer Penny Hansen rang the warning bell and alerted members that at the next meeting they may need to consider budget cutting measures. This is distressing news for a Vestry that took great joy in spreading the largess of the successful fundraising efforts of Rob Hall and Stephanie Deutsch just a few months earlier. In addition to identifying areas where spending can be reduced, the Vestry will actively look at current pledges and determine who is behind to date. Parishioners who have not been paying their pledges regularly may expect a phone call from the church leadership explaining the cash flow needs of the church.

A common thread throughout the meeting involved the cost of babysitting. Church leadership has been particularly attentive to the needs of parents with young children. As a greater proportion of the parish now involves families with children, it seems that all areas of activity are seeking ways to make it easier for these members to participate in our community life. In particular, the Christian Education program has itself covered nursery costs and heavily subsidized gateway courses such as the Baptism Class, Introduction to Life at St. Mark's, and the course formerly known as the Confirmation Class - Life, Community and Faith (LCF). The experiment that used surplus Christian Ed funds was a great success, as more people signed up for LCF under the reduced burden. However, Christian Ed does not expect such significant surpluses in the future. Because these classes help to increase membership and serve the entire parish - not just a particular Christian Ed desire - the Christian Education leaders are requesting that general funds help to defray the costs of providing nursery services and a tuition subsidy for these classes. Because Christian Education activities have always been self-sustaining and off-budget, this would be a significant change in operations. However, there is a general belief that greater transparency and integration into the entire parish would not be a bad thing. This topic will be discussed further in July. †

Music at St. Marks

CELEBRATE!

Dr. Keith S. Reas has been Director of Music at St. Mark's for 10 years **and it's time to celebrate!**

Please plan to join the St. Mark's community and Keith's family and friends in honoring him at a special concert that will take place Saturday, September 22, 2001 at 2:30 p.m. in the Nave.

Works to be performed at the concert include:

Concerto in D, F.A. Brix
Organ Concerto, Howard Hanson
Concertino in G Minor, Francis Poulenc
~ and the world premiere of ~
Concertino for Organ, Paul Steven Leary
commissioned by the Nancy Ruyler Dodge Trust
in honor of Keith Scott Reas

Keith S. Reas, organ - with orchestra

Guest conductor will be Franz Vote, who was formerly staff conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and is currently Music Director for the Seattle Opera 2001 Wagner Ring Cycle

The concert will be followed by a light buffet supper in the Parish Hall.

MORE INFORMATION TO COME!

ENJOY!

Music at St. Mark's announces

Vocal Glories
2001-2002 Concert Series



Alexandria Choral Society
Friday, November 2, 2001 at 8:00 p.m.



Caroline Thomas
February, 2002
(exact date to be announced)



Choir of St. Mark's
Sunday, February 24, 2002 at 3:00 p.m.



Mensa Sonora
March, 2002
(exact date to be announced)



Choir of Lichfield Cathedral
Saturday, April 6, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.



Watch the Gospel and your mailbox for more information!

THE 2002 ST. MARK'S CHOIR TOUR

June 18 - July 3, 2002 *

(*extensions can be arranged)

ITINERARY

Lichfield and Saffron-On-Walden, England & Florence, Montecatini Terme, Ravenna, Venice and Bellagio (Lake Como), Italy

FEATURES

Eight St. Mark's choir concerts (possibly including Basilica San Marco in Venice and the Duomo - Choral Evensong at Lichfield Cathedral, Joint concert with Saffron-on-Walden) • lots of free time • guided tours • excellent hotels • home stays in England • A minimum of two nights in each location • luxury coach transportation

TOUR COST

\$2,600-\$2,700 per person - covers flights, surface transport, lodging, some meals. Some partial singer scholarships are available

INVITED

All singers (especially Sopranos), their spouses, partners, family members and significant-others AND St. Mark's parishioners (Maximum total 47 people)

ACT NOW

\$200 Deposit per person is due July 15 to secure your space - Deposit should be sent as soon as possible to Hayden Boyd, Tour Treasurer.

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact Director of Music, Keith Reas OR Ellen Cardwell
Tour Coordinator, (703) 237-9272 or ERCardwell@aol.com

VOLUNTEER!

Music Lovers and Music Skeptics!

The Music at St. Mark's Concert Series wants you!

We are recruiting volunteers for the 2001-2002 series to help with publicity, ticket sales, house management, and a variety of other unbelievably rewarding jobs, large and small.

Meet interesting people! Hear beautiful music! Volunteer once or for the entire season!

For more information - and to get dibs on the best jobs - contact Jan Genzvro, Concert Manager
jang@boo.net or 202.543.2092

Theology According to Pippin

by Ellen Cardwell

Let me start by stating clearly - I am not a fan of the musical play, "Pippin." As a piece of theater, I think it is episodic, outdated and filled with stereotypes. Except for a few tunes, the music is not particularly memorable...the humor is broad and randy...and the characters are not exactly deep, "nuanced", or historically accurate.

I first saw the show in Boston 23 years ago where I left the theater clenching my teeth and muttering under my breath. After the St Mark's Players were established in 1983, Mary Lou Coffman, our first Music Director and I, the Player's "Founding Mother" and Artistic Director, would periodically recite the incantation - "We will NEVER do Pippin!" Of course, Mary Lou and I are long gone from Players' decision-making so it was probably fated that eventually the St. Mark's Players would indeed "do Pippin."

Given all that, I found the St. Mark's Players recent production of "Pippin" terrific - with polished performances, fabulous dancing and singing, intelligent direction, a clever set, and a really competent orchestra. I was reminded once again how fortunate we are at St. Mark's to have so enterprising and determined a troupe of volunteers bringing live theater - yes, quality theater - to our parish and the wider community.

But what struck me most was how this show I thought so shallow and silly, so 70s', actually focused on the central issues of being human and the kinds of dilemmas and tensions we explore in our Functional Education classes and in our worship services here at St. Mark's.

When we meet Pippin, he is trying to figure out a purpose and a meaning for his life. He doesn't want to be ordinary - no, he wants to be special - and he feels a sense of entitlement about his destiny. Everything he attempts is, to one degree or another, a "sin" - he keeps missing the mark and every adventure leaves him feeling even more empty than before. He plunges into violent conquest to please his father (what Charles Penniman might refer to as "an absentee trustee") and compete with his brother - and then he indulges in debauchery and promiscuity. He is alternately a "fly on the wall" or "being himself all over the place." Then he tries the spiritual path and fervent praying (think "false saviors") but that too yields no "meaning". Finally he kills off his father (think psychotherapy and more "false saviors"). All the while he justifies and rationalizes his motives and his behavior. Ultimately he feels alienated and alone. He is propelled into dark spiraling despair.

Then, by chance, Pippin has an opportunity to love and to be loved, to contribute in community, to be forgiven and live his days as an ordinary fellow in a clearly defined and limited world. But Pippin rebels and runs away; thus rejecting those who try to reach out to him and hurting those who love him in the process.

Finally Pippin is tempted to a dramatic act of "self-immolation" - to be crucified and transcend his human state as a "grand finale." At the last possible moment, he pulls back and instead chooses "real life." We might describe what he does as "saying yes to what is, to the way things are." One could call it an act of faith since Pippin doesn't know the outcome but can now step into his own life with a sense of confidence. When asked how he feels - just the kind of question that a class leader might ask in a plenary session - Pippin shrugs and smiles and answers: "Trapped.....but happy." This is a truly Unit V existence - grounded in life, without illusions or pretenses but able to move on.

Who of us has not experienced an existence something like Pippin's: dreaming big dreams and hoping to find meaning in a "meaningless" world, unwilling to settle or accept forgiveness and acknowledgement when it is offered, running, hiding, over-reaching, and dissembling, being self-destructive, hurting the people we love. And ultimately, discovering that affirming life in an ambiguous world can be a simple and gentle thing.

The St. Mark's Players mission statement asserts: "The St. Mark's Players is a participatory company that uses theater to explore our lives - theologically and personally - and to serve our community and the St. Mark's Parish." Looking at the Players mission statement, in the context of having seen Pippin, I was impressed by how much a show that I had not wanted to see performed at St. Mark's and didn't particularly like, actually used the magic and medium of theater to explore life - both theologically and personally. ☩

St. Mark's Worship Schedule

Sunday

9:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist - The N ave

9:45 a.m.

Sunday School - The Undercroft

10:00 a.m.

Sermon Seminar - The N ave

11:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist - The N ave

Babysitting is available
from 9am to 12:30pm

Thursday

Each Thursday at noon, St. Mark's celebrates the Holy Eucharist, remembering an event in the life of Christ, or a saint or hero in our tradition.

The Gospel According to St. Mark's

A publication of
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
118 Third Street, S.E.,
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Editor: Tracie Van Dorpe
Phone: 202.543.3927

We welcome contributions on any
aspect of parish life by members of
the St. Mark's Community.



Send contributions to the Editor by
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tvandorpe@thecarlylegroup.com
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the undercroft.

Article guideline: 750 words

Hello from Alaska!

I wanted to write a short message to St. Marksians now that I am back in Alaska and somewhat settled in my townhouse again. The more I reflect on my experience with you, and as I gain some distance from that experience, I know that I was drawn to St. Mark's for a reason--perhaps for several reasons. Surely the primary reason was to prepare me for the kind of collaborative ministry I foresee having, both with the new Rector of my home parish and with a congregation that is becoming more comfortable with the concept of empowerment of the laity.

I begin work at St. Mary's in Anchorage on July 16, but prior to that I'll be attending a week-long training in Pastoral Care Leadership held in Seattle. This is an area of ministry I'm really glad to be taking on--one which involves members of the congregation ministering to each other as listeners and consolers. Then, on July 22, I'll be ordained to the priesthood during the regular Sunday worship service. I like the idea of including it in the regular course of worship.

Even before becoming employed I'm getting involved in some community issues, representing St. Mary's. I've met with the Superintendent of Schools in a meeting which included other clergy to discuss a proposed change to District policy that would preclude individuals from harassing others on the basis of "sexual orientation." All clergy were in agreement that this was a good addition to existing categories--with the exception of a very vocal Pastor from the Southern Baptist Church--a strong presence in Anchorage. I testified that evening at the public hearing in support of the change and was gratified to have so many students and parents come forward to thank me. The more progressive clergy have not always been very vocal in presenting their point of view. I may have found my calling.

I'm looking forward to seeing Dave and Gretchen Wilson from St. Mark's as they visit Anchorage in July. If anyone else is ever up this way, please let me know. I'm at (907) 272-3775 or at constance.jones@alaska.net. I think of St. Mark's folks often. I know you will be as welcoming and helpful to the seminarians next year as you were to me. Wishing you God's grace and peace always,

Connie Jones

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St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill
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